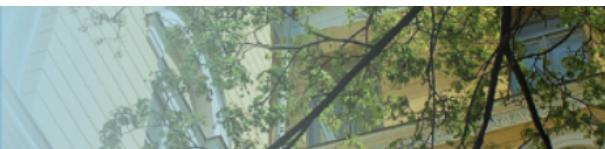


Language and the Scientific Imagination
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Architecture of Criticality: From Mythos, Ethnos, Ethos and Pathos to Logos

1. Introduction

The purpose of the paper is to contribute to the advancement of creative discourse on architectural history, theory and criticism and juxtapose them against the contemporary challenges of urban design, information technology, and building materiality. The interdisciplinary nature of the paper posits scholars and practitioners from various realms to reflect upon scenarios pertaining to the genetic education of culture of peace, the spread of quality of life and the enhancement of sustainable development from the emerging European perspective. The broad scope of it serves as an impetus for debate amongst academics and hands-on designers to articulate global issues, to highlight regional concerns and to acquire collective consciousness. It attempts to project position clarification via case studies to harmonize the theoretical realm of design with the pragmatic domain of building construction. It aspires to promote thought provoking and thoughtful making of architecture. The paper initiates a debate on architecture of criticality. It stipulates a dialectical model by synergistically mapping the content of mythos, the concept of ethnos, the comprehension of ethos, the context of pathos and the communication of logos onto religion, philosophy, anthropology, psychology and language, respectively. In pursuit of novel insights into the realm of broadening the scope of architectural creativity the model investigates why, how, where, what, and for whom the synergetic mediation articulates the fundamentals of infinity, the instinctual questions

of survivability, the pursuits of intellectual immortality, the striving for the interest of eternal gratification, and the inspiration to attain the universals of prediction.

Historically, architecture has symbolized the ideals of class aspiration, formed societies instinctive consciousness, advanced humanity's code of conduct, promoted individual and group interests, and evolved to become a profound expression of embodied knowledge. The story of construction is mirrored in the history of civilization and, conversely, the history of de-construction is narrated in the story of annihilation. To contribute to the advancement of creative discourse on architecture beyond surveying, architectural history has transposed into theory and architectural philosophy into criticism. Those have been juxtaposed against challenges of urban design, information technology, and building materiality in our trans-modern condition. The genetic foundation of education pertaining to culture of peace, healthy spread of basic, social, ethical, cultural and spiritual quality of life, and the enhancement of sustainable environment for productive work, meaningful recuperation, and creative recreation development from the emerging European perspective may have global ramifications.

2. Main argument

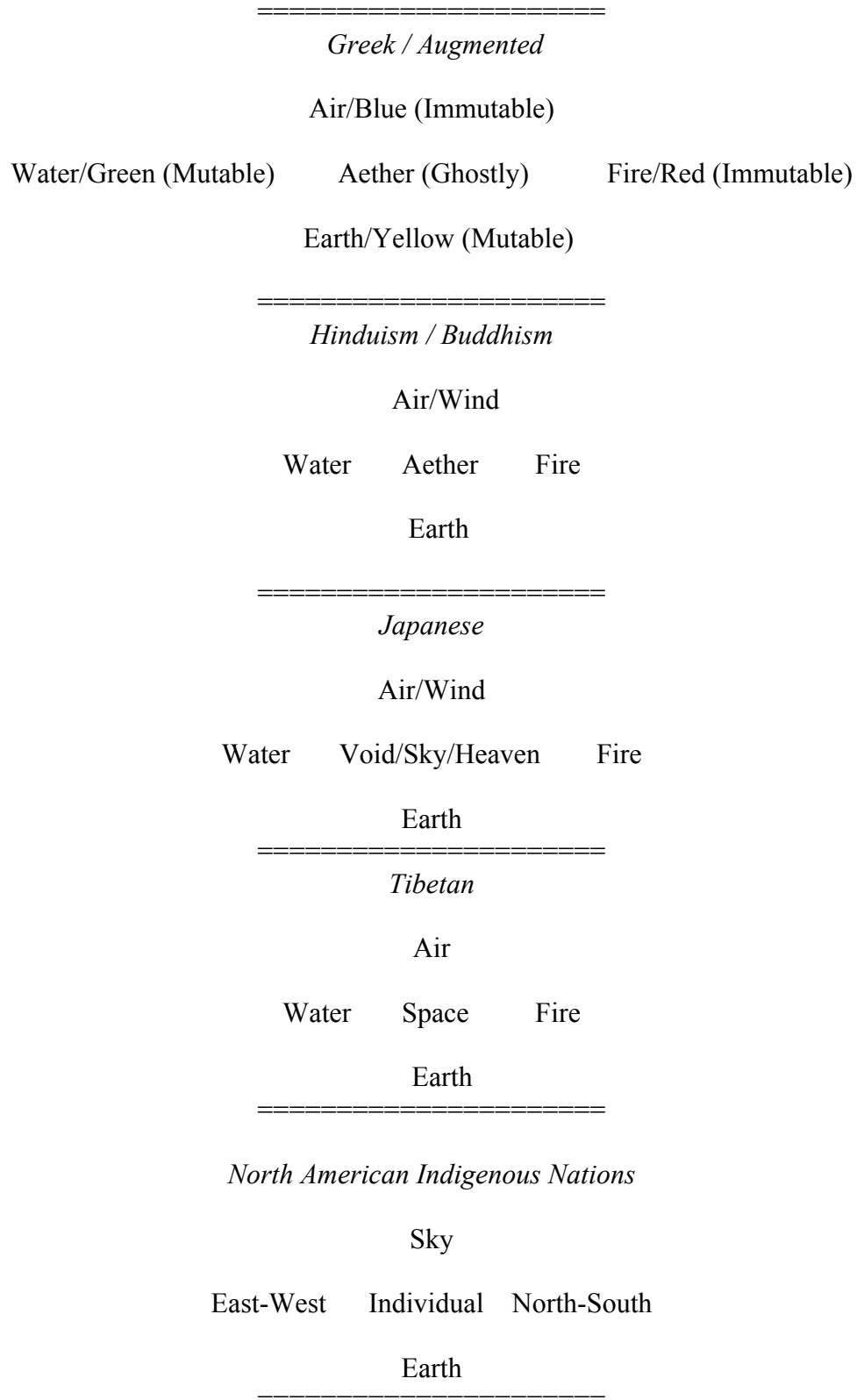
It can be argued that science attempts to discover the laws of nature for potential energy, technology struggles to convert it into kinetic energy, and architecture transforms the former and the latter into embodied energy in building tectonics of skeleton and the skin. Space matter and body motion define the artifact and the ritual, and initiate the dwelling. Vision of architectural mythos manifesting motivation of intentionality transcends non-

adaptivity of site and climate and exerts itself beyond the firmness of architecture of building physicality. Instinctive, yet objective, mission of architectural ethnicity for bio-life establishes the rhythm for movement-rest in horizontality accommodating plan of action for architecture of survivability. Thought provoking intentionality pertaining to architectural ethos encompassing primordial needs for human shelter and the quest for sustenance and life enhancing anthropological adaptivity is juxtaposed against the code of conduct of architectural bio-ethics imbedded in morality of means and ends. Hence, architectural pathos as surreal spatial articulation of emotional verticality, beyond the attainment of individual-group socio-psychological interest contentment, aspires to claim an urban presence in inner identity striving for ecstasy in nirvana. Finally, architectural logos in modeling the world on thoughtful making, reflects on the language of reasoning in architectural communication as it relates to speculative prediction in hermeneutical projection.

3. Scope Broadening

In broadening the scope of architectural creativity a reference of historical architecture to elements of nature, from different cultural perspectives, may attempt to establish a basis for interconnectivity. There seems to be a universality regarding the classical, albeit basic, components of nature in most cultural manifestations, as they relate to developing a horizontal axiology of the dwelling existence and positioning of the individual with architecture at the vertical nexus. (Fig.1)

Fig.1: Architecture & Classical (BASIC) Elements of Nature



ISSEI 2008 Conference Theme

It is rare nowadays to see any fruitful dialogue between the Humanities and Science. In the first half of the twentieth century philosophers like Russell and Whitehead, following the Kantian tradition, were the main interlocutors in the debate about modern science. By the end of the twentieth century, under the influence of Nietzsche, Heidegger, and Wittgenstein, the dialogue of philosophy had switched from science to literature. This dialogue within the humanities eventually issued in Cultural Studies. What is needed is a new approach of the Humanities to Science and Technology. The “two cultures” depend on each other, for human beings give sense to their lives both by doing (Science / *Technology*) and by telling stories (Language).

Historical architecture in seeking unity of “Two Cultures” has strived to place a priority in human social events, as opposed to preference given to the individual in the setting of architecture and the cosmological elements of nature. (Fig.2) The mutable earth and the immutable sky in the vertical axis, in harmony with immutable mythos and mutable mortals in the horizontal axis, define the ethos of human condition. Historical architecture embodying the immutable mythos-pathos and mutable earth-mortals brings credence to events-driven ethos of thinking and making. Myth and ethnicity manifested in literature, extended into logic of imagination and intentionality of aspiration for the unknown, and combined with innovation of understanding -- yield the anthropology of ethics. Hence, the unity of telling stories (Language) and doing things (Science / *Technology*).

Fig.2: Historical Architecture & Unity of “Two Cultures”

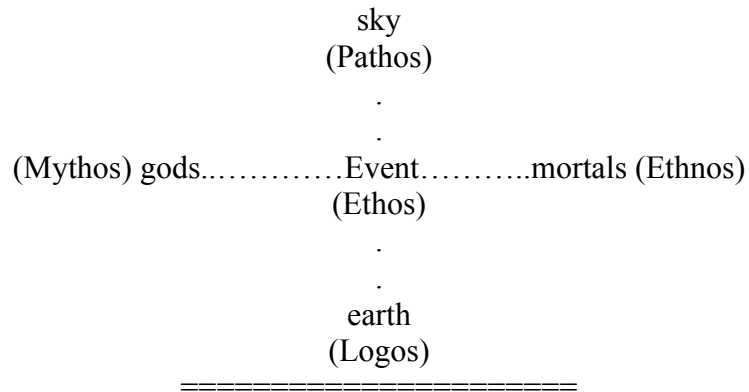


Fig.3: A Dialectical Model of Human-Nature-Architecture

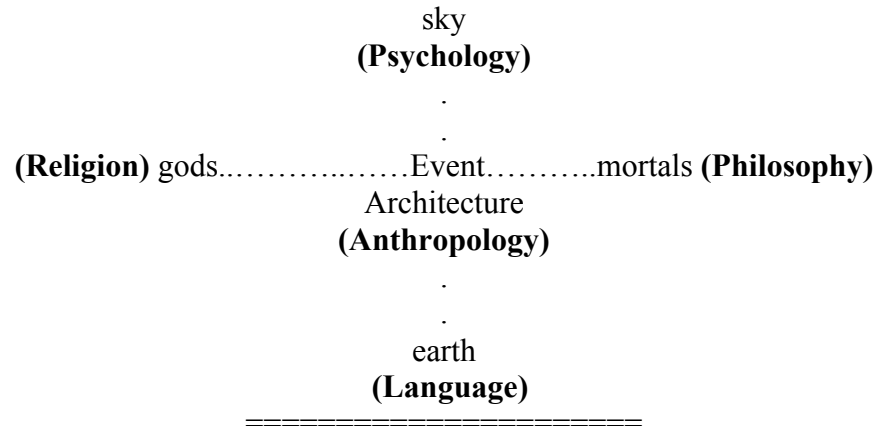
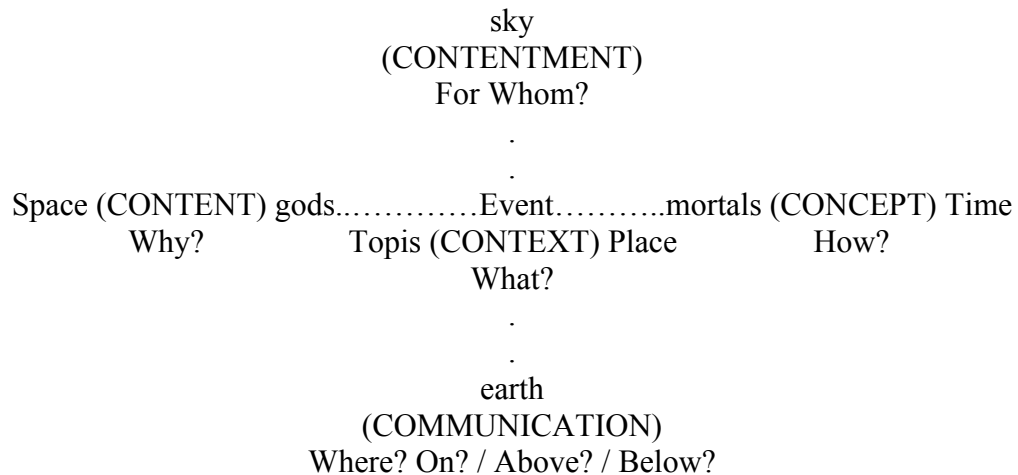


Fig.4: Broadening the Scope of Architectural Design



In the dialectical model of human-nature and event-architecture re-alignment, religion as a belief system manifestly depicts the will of gods and attempts to influence the mortals' philosophy of dis-contentment, through dynamics of horizontal group engagement in social interaction. (Fig.3) Human anthropological condition mediating between the languages of earthy reasoning and sky-elevated emotionalism attempts to fulfill the desire for psychological contentment, aspiring to attain ecstasy. (Fig.4) Then, in broadening the scope of architectural design, questions will be raised and articulated in design pertaining to 1) why the conviction of spatial content should be embodying a vision, 2) how the mediation of temporal concept should leading to a mission, 3) what the topological contextuality of the place-making should be self-referential, 4) where the situatedness should be grounded, and lastly 5) for whom the architectural scenario should be resonating and reflecting?

4. First focus: Architecture as signature of time

Public intimacy is advanced by the dialectic of architecture and the arts, mediated by natural phenomena. It strives for the invisible void to claim a vital threshold, attempts to decipher immutable space to reveal metaphysical essence, and aspires to transform intangible existence into synesthetic experience. Giuliana Bruno ⁽¹⁾, however, limits the initiation of public intimacy to visibility of the artifact, and promotes the notion that its dynamic, yet transposed, screen imagery is shaping the contemporary condition of mind as it relates to culture. In this scenario the collaborative work stipulated by the architect, the artist, the scientist and the film technologist synergizes a novel cross-medium relationship, which manifests the body's social and psychological interactions in space

and intends to reveal the dweller's mental states in motion. Hence, the bi-polar nature of the filmic story of the arts in architecture and its expression come forth: On the one hand, the rational character—as the embodiment of group optimism and hopeful externalism—celebrates social confidence in the choreography of the majority, and on the other, the emotionally derelict psychological identity of self—as the embodiment of individual pessimism and hopeless internalism—witnesses the moody persona in the melancholy of the minority.

The argument, in retrospect, re-visits the “museum” promenades of modernity as the manifestation of dis-placement, dis-orientation and de-contextualization of the theatres of the collective for the reflection on cultural heritage. Here filmic art alludes to psychic installation in time and space for the unraveling of the subject's unconscious realm as it pertains to spatial actualization that penetrates memory layers. Hence bodies and the projection of 2D images set the arena for the architectural encounter as the frame of mind in “lived space.” The author references the anatomical corporeality in prosthetics as resistance to complete absorption by technologically articulated synesthesia enhanced by virtual reality. It cites filmic media—2D movement in 3D simulated space—as the psychoanalytical instrument to delineate and reconstruct consciousness in remembering. It propagates the vision that the artful amalgamation of architecture, film, and installation investigates the “otherness” on the cultural landscape, which is yet to be fully potentialized, indeed genuinely characterized, and eventually verified as meaningful resistance to the “un-trusted” cyberspace and its immersive exploitations of virtuality.

The narrative discourse evolves to become an enhancement of the multi-dimensional

physicality of the artifact, which is conceived by moving the light in the void and is perceived by mutable visibility and tangible interactivity. Yet, the void in essence stages the existential in intentionality of the mind to be claimed by human emotive activation of dwelling in and around the artifact setting in pursuit of nullification of emptiness. The argument aspires to tectonic spirituality in verticality and portrays platform corporeality in horizontality: it intends to project perpetual imagery beyond place making, for the characterization of the architecture of visibility is a time signature, into which the public is artfully and intimately initiated.

Fig.5: Systemic World & Theory of Everything

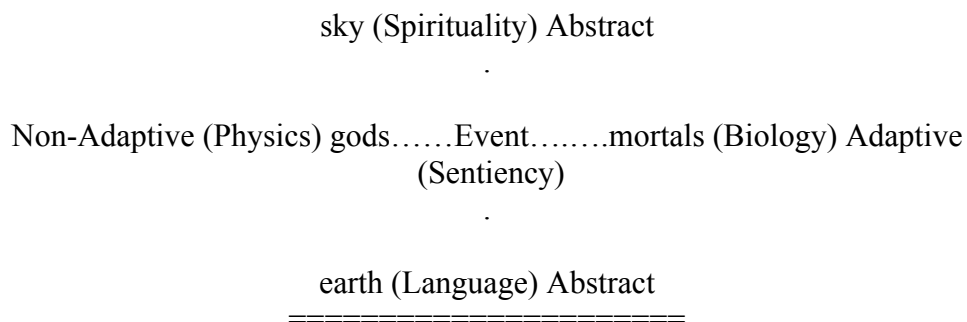
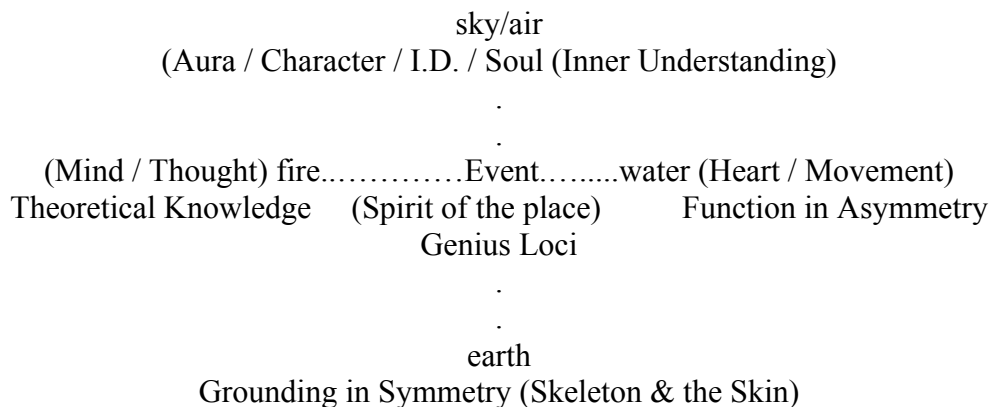


Fig.6: Architecture as Mediator of Nature + Body



5. Theory of Everything & Architecture

Any theory of world necessarily embraces a systemic view, which becomes even more pertinent if it pertains to the co-relation of everything. Hence, a four-dimensional matrix commencing with non-adaptive physics (Conservation Law), then adaptive biology (Regenerative Law), adaptive sentiency (Socio-psychological Law), and adaptive yet abstract language (Literacy Law) – strives to define the quintessential yet abstract energy force (Spirituality Law). (Fig.5)

If architecture will assume the role of mediator between tangible physicality of nature and intangible meta-physicality of body, then theoretical knowledge advancing functionality of setting should culminate in the celebration of event as *genius loci* and inner understanding of place-making. (Fig.6)

6. Second focus: Architecture as signature of place

Ever since the writings of Martin Heidegger, a German philosopher of the 20th Century, have become more accessible through English translation to academia, the condition of the mind, as it relates to universal dwelling, has evolved to focus more on the interrelationship between place and situated-ness (time and being), and has attempted to define the world of becoming, via *techne* – the art of making. Recently, Heideggerian positing triggered anthropologists and architecture theorists: it asserts consistency in the articulation of bodily engagement in the immediacy of artifact design and building, and tagged it the Thing. By extension, the Thing assumes architectural connotations – by defining human experience in and around the Event, and by constructing the memory of

place. The Thing was to embody the Event to first mediate between the earth/sky on the vertical axis, and second between mortals and pagan deities on the horizontal axis -- to claim Heideggerian dialectic. Accordingly, under the watchful protective divinities, humanity was to seek order in symbolism and achieve harmony in balance in order to attain ecstasy in abundance. To his credit, Jeff Malpas (2) clarifies most of the ideas mentioned above in **Heidegger's Topology** and elsewhere. However, it is worth noting the body of literature as he incorporates lacks architectural referencing. (Fig.7-8-9)

Fig.7: Timelines and Definitions in Heidegger's Topology: Being, Place, World

1910-1920 (**Being** & Time = Meaning of Being – How? Concept?)

1930-1940 (Truth of Being – Why? Content?)

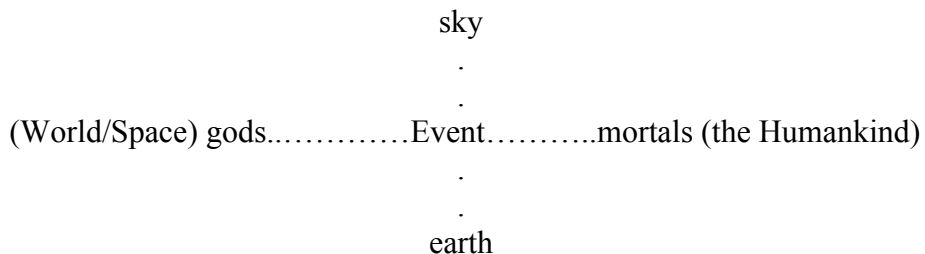
1940-on (**Place** of Being – What? Context?)

EVENT (definition) = The Happening (gathering/working) of **Place**
through (its basic elements of gods, mortals, sky & earth) **The Ritual**;

The THING (definition) = Work of Art, **The Artifact**, e.g., Temple (Greek)

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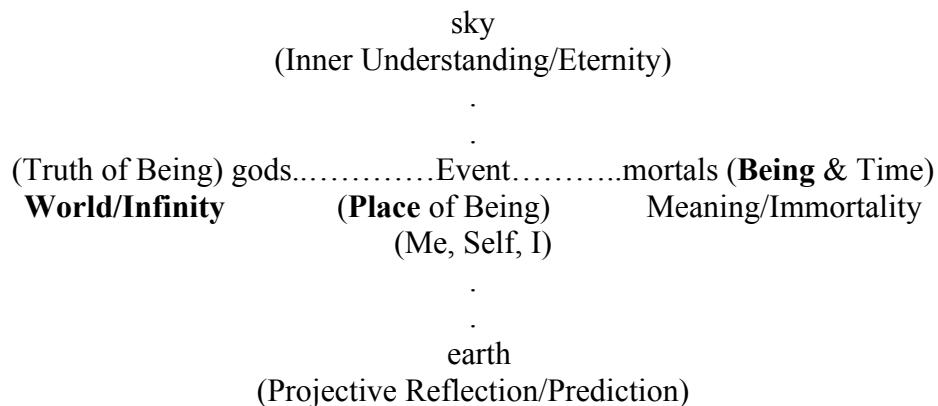
Fig.8: The Place of Experience in Heidegger's "Contributions"



Commencing early 1980's, Heidegger's controversial character and his more mature yet still paradoxical work has become an item of curiosity for scholars and designers of

architecture. The educators of the phenomenologist camp, resisting the doctrines of techno-modernists, have built their case by metaphorizing Heidegger's opaque ideas and staged passionate quests for the revival of traditional crafts in the making of architecture. Instrumental reasoning that was articulated through the inclusion of modern technology in design and practice was critically questioned. The dilemma, as stipulated by Malpas, is that Heidegger was a "live" thinker and as such, he was ambivalent about his intentionality behind developing ideas. Indeed, Heidegger's work was open to hermeneutical interpretations in the realm of the "how" and "the way" the Thing and the Event were disclosed, as opposed to "why" and "for whom" they were portrayed. Hence, in reference to the present condition, the Heideggerian inquiry, poised by its limiting discourse investigating the Greco-German etymology, must broaden its scope to include the Indo-European and further juxtapose this against the Egyptian-Sumerian-Babylonian parallax -- if at all it aspires to claim any universality.

Fig.9: Heidegger's Topology Mapped onto "The Thing" & "Event"



Basically, this argument is a criticism of Modernism, as manifested by the Heideggerian philosophy against instrumentalism pertaining to Being, Place and World; it is as well an

objectification of the world in science vs. the hermeneutical subjectification in the realm of literature. Architecture, as embodied science / technology and also a language in its own right to express ideas, constantly obscures and reveals its essences over time as narrative discourses evolve. Then, subjectivity in self-criticism overrides the deciphering of objectivity in realism. Hence, the artifact and the ritual in architecture act as a union of the opposites sustaining their essential and accidental existences. They define the limits of sustenance in the domain of the knowable and the unknowable. (Fig.11,12,13)

Fig.11: Scientific (Horizontal/Measurable) vs. Literary (Vertical/Non-Measurable)

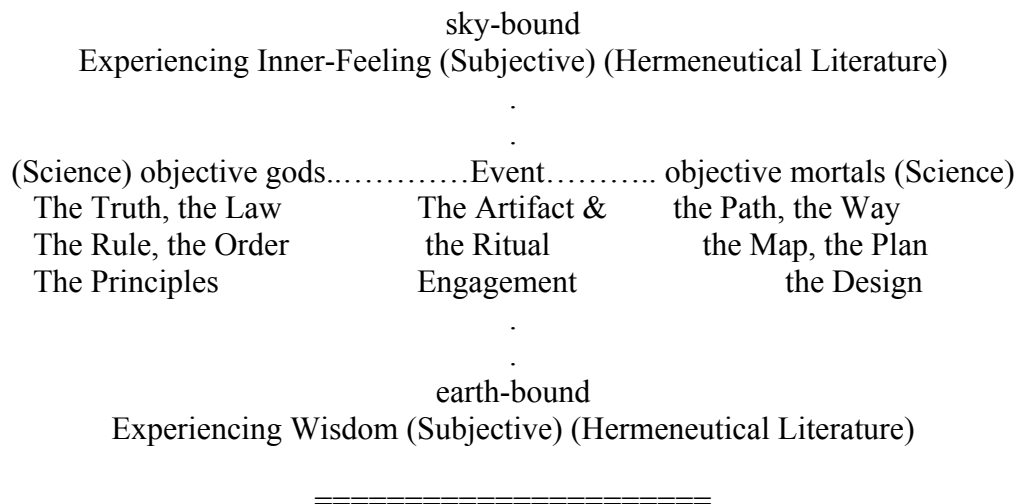


Fig.12: Architecture Striving for Sustainability

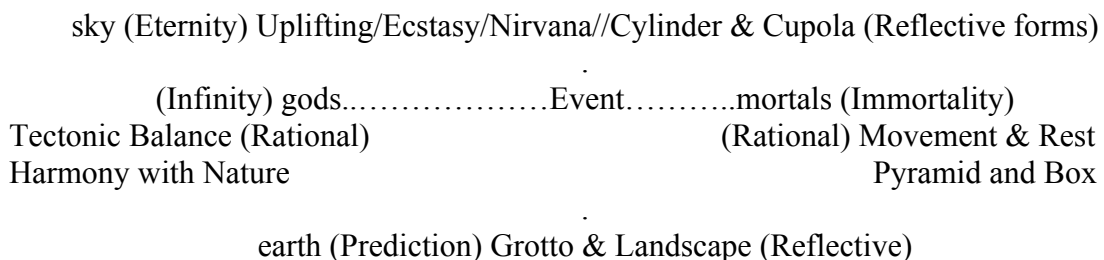
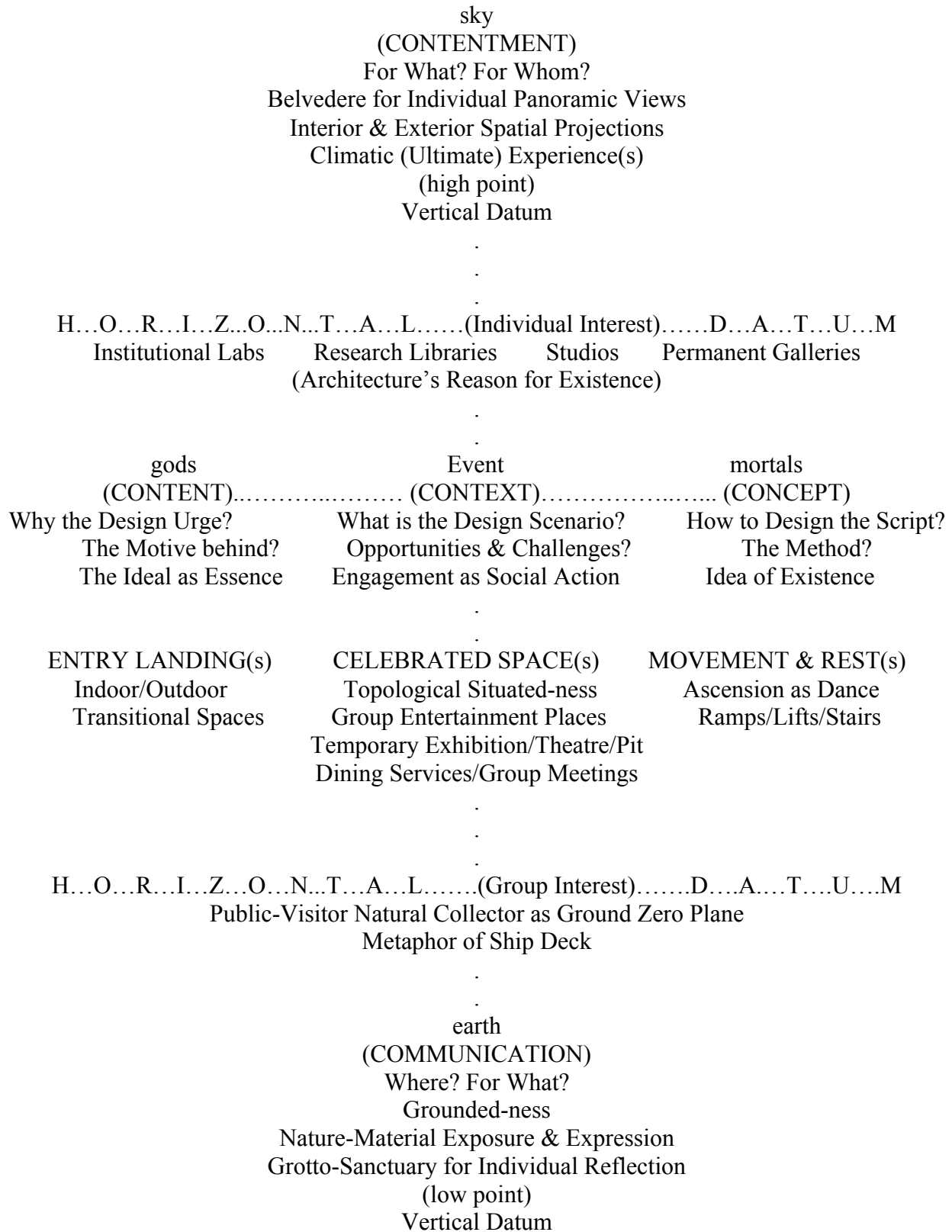


Fig.13: Architecture as Animated Narrative



Two eternal questions in architecture are still-hunting the scholars on issues relating to thesis-theory-practice in design. Firstly, Why, How, What ... is the Architect-Designer-God-Demiurge thinking about the Artifact and the Ritual as opposed to the reality in dwelling, and secondly, Why, How, What ... are Visitors-Users-Owners-Occupants dwelling experiences in relation to the Artifact and the Ritual?

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¹ Giuliana Bruno, *Public Intimacy: Architecture and the Visual Arts* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2007).

² Jeff Malpas, *Heidegger's Topology: Being, Place, World* (Cambridge, MA, London, England: The MIT Press, 2007).